

Alaska Trauma Registry Calendar January 2000

State of Alaska
Department of Health and Social Services
Division of Public Health
Community Health and Emergency Medical Services

Seven registrars attended the **Trauma Registrar Workshop** in December—four new ones and three back for a refresher. Next year we are tentatively planning a registrar workshop for the full group in order to go over some old, but still troublesome, concepts and to teach some new skills that will be needed for upcoming changes. Please leave the week of December 4 open and we will plan to schedule it sometime during that week.

Senator Johnny Ellis will introduce legislation this session requiring children and young people under age 16 to wear helmets while operating or riding a bicycle. Four Alaskans under age 16 died of bicycle injuries and 155 were hospitalized during the four years, 1994-1997. It was the third leading cause of serious accidental injury for this age group, affecting about 40 children per year.

The Alaska Trauma Registry tells us that bicycle injury hospitalizations cost on average \$10,000 per patient and 40% of the patients are either uninsured or bill Medicaid.

The **Youth Risk Behavior Survey** of 1995 asked a state-wide sample of Alaskan high school students about use of helmets while riding bicycles; 88.4% reported that they do not wear helmets.

Most children who are fatally or seriously injured in bicycle crashes in Alaska are not wearing helmets at the time of the crash. About 10 children a year in Alaska suffer brain injuries due to bicycle crashes. Hospital costs for those with brain injuries averaged almost \$12,000 per patient. Charges for the unhelmeted bicyclists are, on average, 57% greater than for the helmeted patients.